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1-1-2008

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### Recommended Citation

Patrick, William J., "NT 632 Exegesis of Philippians" (2008). *Syllabi*. Book 2327.  
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# NT 632 EXEGESIS OF PHILIPPIANS

SPRING 2008

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## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

### A. Catalog Description

An exegetical study of the letter to the Philippians which focuses upon the application of basic exegetical principles of the Greek text and understanding the text within the literary, linguistic, historical, cultural, and conceptual contexts in which it was originally circulated. Prerequisite: NT(IFS)510 or 511; NT520; and NT500 or 501/502 or equivalent. (May be taken by students in M.A. programs not requiring Greek by special arrangement with the professor.)

### B. Course Learning Objectives:

Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify, analyze, evaluate, and employ a range of exegetical frameworks/tools relevant to the interpretation of the New Testament book(s) in question, and to extend such skill to other New Testament books of similar genre;
2. Situate the New Testament book(s) in question within plausible socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts;
3. Identify central issues in the critical study of the New Testament book(s) in question;
4. Articulate the importance of accounting for/critiquing one's own presuppositions and construal mechanisms in the task of interpretation;
5. Articulate the specific theological and ethical concerns of the New Testament book(s) in question;
6. Demonstrate awareness of how the theological and ethical concerns of the New Testament book(s) in question contribute to those of the canon and of constructive theology and ethics;
7. Differentiate between critical and homiletical/devotional commentaries and studies of this and other New Testament books;
8. Evaluate critically the nature and usefulness of secondary literature in the study of New Testament books;
9. Use Greek-based language tools to demonstrate proficiency in lexical semantics and category conceptualization; and,
10. Use Greek-based language tools to identify, describe, and weigh the relative importance of issues related to grammar (i.e., with regard to sentence structure, use of clauses, verbal aspect, tense, mood, voice, case, etc.).
11. Consider and articulate the various practical applications of one's exegetical study both in relation to one's sense of call to ministry within the community of faith and toward the world at large.

## II. COURSE MATERIALS

### A. Assumed Texts

1. Access to two modern translations of the NT, preferably at least one “literal” or formal equivalence (e.g., New American Standard, Revised Standard, English Standard Version, New Revised Standard) and one “dynamic equivalence” translation (e.g., New International). Paraphrases (Living Bible, New Living Translation, The Message) are not suitable for the purposes of this course.
2. Access to a critical edition of the Greek text: e.g., United Bible Society (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> ed.); Nestle-Aland (26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> ed.), or to a Greek-English interlinear based on these Greek texts. Students are expected to bring a copy of the Greek text of Philippians or an interlinear to class meetings.
3. BibleWorks 5.0 or higher is highly recommended and will by itself more than satisfy 1 and 2. Students will be expected to work with the BibleWorks program for exegetical assignments. If you do not own the software, it will be your responsibility to find time in the Library’s computer lab to fulfill the assignment.

### B. Required Textbooks

Adam, A.K.M., Stephen Fowl, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Francis Watson. *Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Education*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. ISBN: 0-8010-3173-7

Kovecses, Zoltan. *Language, Mind and Culture: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN: 0-19-518720-2

Malina, Bruce and John Pilch. *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006. ISBN: 0-8006-3640-6

[Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001. ISBN: 1-56563-485-3 Although the preceding text is **not** required, I include it here, separate from the recommended texts, for special emphasis for students who might find it helpful to have a solid outline of one scholar’s proposed outline of exegetical methodology. We will be developing our own proposals in class. Also, I am assuming that you still have your materials from your previous Greek instruction, including David Black’s text, *It’s Still Greek to Me*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. ISBN: 0-8010-2181-2. If you do not have this text, it would be best to obtain a copy since I will be asking you to do grammatical analysis in your assignments.]

## III. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

### A. General Exegetical Tools

1. Bibliographical Survey  
David R. Bauer, *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003). This is probably the best and most up-to-date bibliographical survey available—and by one of our own! Students acquiring resources for a biblical studies library are strongly encouraged to own this guide.
2. Lexicons  
Bauer, Walter and Frederick W. Danker et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Though not cheap, this is a “must own” for serious students of the NT. Note that for a hefty fee (\$125, the same as for the print copy) the complete module of BDAG is available to

unlock in Bible Works 5.0 and higher.

3. Exegetical Grammar

Wallace, Daniel. *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. This would be an excellent next step after Black's *Still Greek to Me*—the same kind of book, though less remedial and with much more detail and many more examples. Note also that the unabridged and more detailed version of this reference work, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, is available as a module integrated into BibleWorks.

4. Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia:

a) Basic: Students should own at least one basic one-volume Bible dictionary.

Freedman, David N., ed. *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000.

Wood, D. R. W. et al., eds. *The New Bible Dictionary*. 3d ed. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

b) Advanced:

Evans, Craig A., and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Freedman, David N., ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Martin, Ralph P., Gerald Hawthorne, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993. On the Pauline material in particular.

## B. Philippians Commentaries

It is expected that when reflecting beyond the course textbooks that students will use *these* commentaries rather than some more available but lower quality alternative:

Bockmuehl, Markus. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. BNTC. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998. ISBN: 1-56563-350-4

Bruce, F. F. *Philippians*. NIBC. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1989.

Beare, Francis W. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*. BNTC. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987 [1959].

Collange, J.-F. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians*. Trans. A. W. Heathcote. London: Epworth, 1979.

Fee, Gordon D. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. ISBN: 0-8028-2511-7

Hawthorne, Gerald F. *Philippians*. WBC. Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983.

Hooker, Morna. "The Letter to the Philippians." Pages 467-549 in vol. 11 of *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.

Martin, Ralph P. *Philippians*. NCB. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. TNTC. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987.

O'Brien, P. T. *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991.

Silva, Moisés. *Philippians*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentaries. Chicago: Moody Press, 1988.

Thielman, Frank. *Philippians*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995.

Witherington, Ben, III. *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians*. The New Testament in Context. Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995.

## **IV. COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES**

### **A. Attendance and Participation**

Since this course is pedagogically cumulative and participatory in style, preparation, presence, and participation in class are critical to the meeting of the learning objectives. The course is more of a “skill” course than a “content” course. Therefore, students have a responsibility to themselves and to our learning community to be in attendance and to participate actively, attentively and respectfully. Unavoidable, emergency, or excused-in-advance absences can be made up with appropriate work at the instructor’s discretion.

### **B. Late Assignments**

Assignments are due immediately at the end of each class meeting. Late assignments will not be eligible for a grade higher than “F.” There will be no exceptions to this policy except for the most extreme emergencies. Students must bring previously completed hard-copy work to class and turn in the assignment at the end of the class for which it was assigned. It is unacceptable to print work from one’s computer during or at the end of class to then subsequently turn in. Of course, missing class to finish assignments is not an alternative.

### **C. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is unacceptable, and the following actions, consistent with ATS policy, will be taken:

1. In the case of plagiarism that is apparently inadvertent (the student is not careful to cite sources), the assignment will be returned to be revised before graded. Students will receive a maximum of 70% for the assignment because it will be late.
2. In flagrant cases (copying directly without attribution from printed or electronic sources), the assignment will be given a 0% grade and the Assistant Provost will be alerted to the situation. Plagiarism can be grounds for dismissal from the seminary.

## **V. COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

### **A. Assignments and Evaluation**

1. Exegetical Exercises, Participation and Reading (80%)

For each meeting *excluding the first*, students will engage in a set of directed exegetical activities. These will be due and handed in at the end of each class meeting for which they were assigned. Specific details will be provided each class meeting by the professor. The assignments will usually involve some or all of the following:

- a) reviewing basic Greek grammatical concepts as illustrated in Philippians, including reviewing sections from Black, *SGTM* and a close grammatical analysis of a Greek sentence or sentences from Philippians;
- b) becoming intimately familiar with the content of the selected Philippians passage as demonstrated by an exegetical outline;
- c) practicing additional interpretive reflection on the establishment of meaning (including reviewing and applying sections from Malina/Pilch and Kosvecses);
- d) developing a more sustained, integrated and comprehensive theological position built upon preliminary exegetical work.

## 2. Reflection Paper (10%)

Students will prepare five-page + (double-spaced) response/reflection paper on *Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Education*. Guidelines for the paper will be handed out separately.

## 3. A Synthetic Theological Essays (10%)

For a final assignment students will write an essay on a question which requires reflection on exegetical, theological, and appropriation issues from Philippians. The essay should be about 6+ pages, double-spaced (750 – 1,000 words).

Students may choose from the following topics:

- a) What “christology” does Paul express in Philippians? Make your argument by specific appeal to exegesis of the key texts.
- b) What is the soteriology (doctrine of salvation) that Paul expresses in Philippians? Related questions might be: How is salvation “accomplished”? What is the response of the believer? How “secure” is the believer? What are its results? How does Paul speak to Christian sanctification in the letter? and so on.
- c) How does Paul speak to the issue of community and Christian unity in the letter?
- d) How do Paul’s statements contribute to a theology of resources and finances?

## B. Course Schedule

TBA at the beginning of class